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THREEPENCE

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Anglo-American Relations Behind the Facade of Co-operation

By ANDREW SCOTT

Never was so much promised to so many by so few. The mythical Man from Mars might be excused for jumping to the conclusion that the mission of the British capitalist class is to bring about the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. But no one else could be excused for jumping to that conclusion: and no one else is very likely to do so: least of all the British capitalist class.

For, even as they serve up their mock banquet to the workers, they are engaging in the most serious and sober—not to say pessimistic and 'defeatist'—talk about conditions after the war. The two worlds are entirely different, the world they promise, and the world they seriously discuss as a fast approaching reality.

The principal discussions, of course, are reserved for the Clubs, the Stock Exchange, the Board Rooms and the private gatherings. But enough emerges into the clear light of day via the columns of the 'Times' and the more expensive monthly reviews, together with the less careful speeches, to give some sort of indication as to the conditions and struggles that British capitalism sees ahead.

Looking ahead, the British capitalists see neither the simple picture nor the radiant picture that they hold

before the masses. On the contrary, the picture is both complex and gloomy. While they piously talk in public about only one main enemy, Germany, they meantime discuss in private not a few other enemies—and in tones which are absent when they discuss Germany. Above all they discuss the revolutionary proletariat of Europe, the worker and peasant masses of the East, and, paradox of paradoxes, more greedy and more threatening in some ways than the others, more ambitious and domineering than the others, but (bitter thought for British capitalism) the only guarantee against them—the rival imperialists of America.

It is their relations with American imperialism that we propose to discuss here, for it is in this connection that they have revealed most clearly what will be the real state of affairs after the war, assuming that both German imperialism and the revolution are defeated.

"TERROR AND TIMIDITY"

It may be remarked in passing that the British capitalists not only reveal what sort of dog-fight they envisage after the war but also a weakness and vacillation in face of coming events that can only encourage the work-

ers in their struggle for a genuine solution of the problem. After the last war J. M. Keynes could write:

"The terror and personal timidity of the individuals of this (capitalist) class is now so great, their confidence in their place in society and in their necessity to the social organism so diminished, that they are the easy victims of intimidation."

Today, when a colony is lost every other month (either to enemy or ally) and when a market is taken over every other month (either by ally or enemy) the terror and timidity of the capitalist class has slumped even from its 1918 standard. And today most of the intimidation comes from across the Atlantic:

THE COMING EXPORT BATTLE

The question of exports occupies most of the post-war horizon of British capitalism. Hugh Dalton, President of the Board of Trade, has pointed out that it is **"impossible to exaggerate the importance of exports in the post-war years."** And Sir William Jowitt has added that **"unless we could increase our exports and balance our trade we should be driven to the grave alternative of cutting down our imports, perhaps to the barest necessities."**

Here, then, is a task that would have to be solved before the slightest reality could be given to any idea of a higher standard of living, or "freedom from want". But what are the chances of its being solved? What are the conditions in which they will attempt its solution? Sir William Jowitt concluded the above statement with the pious hope that: **"Surely this problem need not involve once more an unregulated scramble for exports, cutting prices, reducing wages, lowering the standard of living, one country after another debasing its currency to try and steal an advantage in the export market."** He did not indicate any alternative, however, to this traditional method, and it is in such a stormy sea that any reformist plan for the raising of living standards or the abolition of want would be set adrift.

But that is only the palest outline of the true state of affairs in the struggle for export markets: for it assumes merely a repetition of the conditions and methods of pre-war days. In reality, however, the position will be incomparably worse from the point of view of British capitalism. The Far East markets, for instance, may be taken out of Japan's hands, but America is demanding in a louder and louder voice to have access to them. Australia may remain nominally within the Empire, but the Australian market will be mainly a market for American goods. And already a "Times" Correspondent can say: "It is at America's side rather than at Great Britain's that the Australians whom I have met feel that they are fighting." Canada has already been penetrated economically. As for the future European market, America is not training its million "administrators" merely to give them a six months holiday on the Continent and then withdraw them in a gentlemanly fashion. America is deliberately preparing to make use of the entire world including the British Empire and Europe, as a gigantic market for its industrial products and its capital.

AMERICA'S GROWING DOMINATION

America went into the last war a debtor nation to the extent of approximately 3,000 million dollars and emerged a creditor nation so that in 1931 her net creditor position was about 14,000 million dollars. In 1913 the U.S.A. owed Europe 5 billion dollars, and in 1920 Europe owed

the U.S.A. 4.3 milliard dollars in commercial debts and 8.5 milliard dollars in war debts. The national income of Britain expanded until 1896; it was more or less steady till the last war; but since then it has been falling. On the other hand, the national income of America was in 1941 92,200,000,000 dollars—an increase over the 1940 figure to the extent of 16,200,000,000 dollars. America entered the present war as the greatest creditor nation in the world; and is steadily improving her position during the course of it. And especially is this position improving in relation to Britain.

The first "neutral" period of the war proved a regular Eldorado for American imperialism. British purchases were on such a scale that the gold and dollar resources simply melted away. By the end of the "cash and carry" period Churchill was forced to admit: "We did not know which way to turn for a dollar." The £1,779,000,000 which was the estimated amount of British gold and dollar assets on September 3, 1939, had been exhausted in the U.S.A. during the first 18 months of the war. And the United Kingdom deficit of Canadian dollars had in March 1941 reached a figure of about 795,000,000 dollars.

Britain's National Debt, which had risen from £650 million in 1914 to £7,435 million in 1919 started off the present war at £8,163 million and by March 1942 had reached £14,073 million.

BRITAIN A DEBTOR NATION

A gigantic revolution in Britain's economic position is taking place during the course of the war. From a great creditor nation she is being transformed into a debtor nation, and a nation heavily in debt at that. And not only is this taking place in regard to America, but even in regard to the Empire countries! Already the City is becoming anxious at the way in which India and Africa, for instance, are paying off their debts. South Africa has reduced its indebtedness to Britain during the war by at least £100,000,000. In regard to India, Oscar Hobson, City Editor of the "News Chronicle" notes: **"One of the most striking financial feats of this war has been the ability of India to pay off the bulk of its sterling debt."** And the "Times" says: **"When the present transactions are completed Indian Sterling loans will have been virtually liquidated in just over two years."** Just before the war this debt stood at £376,000,000, and the capitalists are getting worried about the next step after it is finally liquidated. When a similar position was reached in Canada an agreement was reached whereby Canada made a "free gift" of 1,000 million dollars to the Mother Country. But Hobson indicates: "naturally I am not suggesting that Canada's example is one that India could or should follow." No, perhaps in the present circumstances it would be better not to suggest that India should make a free gift of 1,000 million dollars to Great Britain. But the alternative may be to take steps towards the mobilising of the £300,000,000 of British commercial investments in India. And that, thinks the City, is a "difficult and complex problem".

INDUSTRIALISATION IN EMPIRE

Throughout the Empire, and, of course, the rest of the world, the process is taking place: Britain's position has become one of debtor, not creditor. And at the same time another process, equally injurious to capitalism in the home country itself, is taking place. Plant is being set up in almost all of the formerly non-industrial countries for the production not only of weapons of war but

textiles, furniture, and many other goods formerly imported. India, for instance, according to the "Times" has shown "great activity in the production of iron and steel, chemicals, cement, coal, and in cotton manufactures, as well as in numerous smaller industries." In Australia the number of factory workers increased from 566,000 just before the war to 692,000 in June 1941, and is now considerably higher. The very exigencies of the war itself are assuring that after it is over British exports will be drastically cut even by this one process of the building up of the industry of the formerly "raw material" countries.

EXPANSION OF AMERICAN INDUSTRY

But the industrial power that is being built up above all others is that of America. The growth of industry in the Dominions, colonies and other regions such as South America is changing the balance as between those countries and Britain; but the phenomenal expansion of American plant and production is laying the basis for a complete revolution in the balance of world trade. Against the measure of that expansion the rosy pictures of the future painted by the British press have no relation to reality. And their protests are like the indignant chirping of a sparrow that finds a contracting company has arrived to build a sky-scraper where it has been in the habit of building its nest.

Already the "Times" has remarked with some misgiving that "by the middle of 1942 America had increased its steel-making capacity by as much as the whole annual output of this country." Aeroplanes are being turned out at the rate of 4,500 a month, and some of them are of such types that the factories making them could easily switch over to the manufacture of gigantic civilian planes. British imperialism knows that it is already beaten in the coming struggle for the control of world air transport. Even the recent appointment of an ace British plane designer to a post in which he will make preparation for the coming struggle is no more than a gesture of despair.

American capitalism is thoroughly conscious of the coming struggle for control of air transport. A House of Representatives Committee has already pointed out: "Very seriously we say to you that the nation which is best prepared to enter world air commerce on a large and effective scale at the end of this war may be the first nation to recover its economic stability." And it adds, in a way that cannot but have a knell-like sound in British capitalist circles: "The American aviation industry will be revolutionised after the present war." On another aspect of the same question the American magazine "Time" comments: "The United States is pouring millions of dollars and invaluable aviation knowledge into huge air bases on British territories such as Bermuda, Fiji and the Solomon Islands, yet to date there is no assurance of landing rights after the war." It can be taken for granted that the pressure to obtain these landing rights (and more besides) will rise in direct proportion as the strength of the U.S. air force, navy and army rises. The question asked by "Time":—"Will Britain and the United States jockey to form rival imperialisms based on air power?" gives some flavour of what is to come.

In the manufacture of ships America has already taken steps that land it far ahead of Britain in the very technique of construction. Pre-fabrication, with all that it means in economy, has been widely introduced. By the end of the war America will not only have the biggest navy in the world but also by far the biggest merchant fleet.

In the making of tanks welding has been introduced, and progress in the actual technique of welding has been

such that it is clear it will be capable of general application to all sorts of steel construction after the war.

In every sphere of American industry both the organisation of production in vast units and the improvement of technique are proceeding apace. Britain's antiquated industrial machine is being left far behind, not only in the production of war goods but also in the coming struggle to produce and sell peace goods.

The war itself is screening the exact figures and facts of the increase in America's power to produce. The "peace", however, will leave no doubt of its astronomical scope.

BATTLE FOR MARKETS

This expansion of U.S. productive capacity is going to be one of the most outstanding and influential phenomena of the next period of history. Its repercussions will be felt in every corner of the globe and indeed are already being felt. For American imperialism is going to have by the end of this war such a capacity to produce goods of every sort and to transport them that it will not dare to permit any markets in the world to be closed to them. Privileged groupings such as the British Empire before the war, or Nazi Europe at the present time, would represent in the future a lethal weapon aimed at the heart of American economy. Ottawa agreements would precipitate a crisis in the U.S.A. Debarment from any big percentage of the world's markets either by tariff walls or by military conquests would bring about such unemployment in America as has never been seen in any country before. And of the truth of this the American capitalists are only too well aware. Their policy is consciously based upon the necessity to have the entire world as a market.

They know the dangers to them of the sort of unemployment forecast for America by Darre, Nazi Minister of Agriculture, when he boasted that "German industrial products will be sold at very low prices to the whole world and thus cause the United States to have not 7 million but 35-40 million unemployed." As one safeguard against such a potential menace the American capitalists are seeking to assure themselves access to every possible market.

See how the process has already started in the very first area they have occupied: and how jealous are the former claimants of that market! In regard to the sending of goods and clothing to North Africa by America the "Manchester Guardian", speaking for the British cotton manufacturers says:

"North-west Africa was bare of supplies of many foodstuffs and of textiles, and it seems clear, from the reports mentioned that the United States has undertaken to make good the deficiencies through the lease-lend machinery. The reopening of the important North-west African markets for cotton goods, accordingly, will bring no fresh business to Lancashire, which formerly did a large trade in that direction."

North Africa is only the first step. America, which before the war with 6 per cent of the world's population held 40 per cent of the world's wealth; America, which now holds 95 per cent of the world's gold; America which will soon have the world's mightiest army, navy and air force; America, with the world's most powerful industrial machine; America, which is already spending £50 million a day on the war; whose industrial output is a quarter of the world's total, three times as great as that of the United Kingdom, and twice as great as that of Greater Germany; and whose major war industries possess little less than half the capacity of the whole world; this America is already tarted on what Trotsky described as "the greatest imperialist explosion in history".

LEND-LEASE — AND REPAYMENT

In the present stage of the battle for domination the outstanding weapon has been that of "lend-lease". This instrument has been used both to secure domination over former competitors and to penetrate formerly closed markets. The John Bull had used up his entire U.S. balance. Uncle Sam kindly offered to continue providing goods which would be repaid after the war. But the British capitalists know only too well that they will not be permitted to repay in goods. Even after the last war American tariff walls had to be raised to enormous heights to keep out British and other goods. After the present war they will be even higher. When one British paper calls on America to accept payment in imports of goods and asks for the reduction of the "gigantic barrier of the Hawley-Smoot tariff" it is merely voicing a forlorn hope. And when it adds that if this is not done then "we can just treat the Atlantic Charter as a well-meant if rather clumsy joke", it is speaking no more than the truth.

What, then, will be the coin in which America demands payment of "lend-lease" aid? **Nothing less than markets, together with strategic bases.** And already this process has begun. In the West Indies and off the coast of Canada several bases have already been occupied. In East Africa, Eritrea is both base and market; in West Africa, Liberia provides a stepping stone to vast areas; North-west Africa provides for the interests both of strategy and trade; in the East Indies the same process will take place, but perhaps with a greater boldness and haughtiness; and, when Europe eventually is invaded and (as they hope) the Revolution crushed, that, too, will be a market for American goods.

From the last war Britain emerged victorious over her greatest capitalist rival on the Continent. Lloyd George expressed himself shortly afterwards on the subject in the following words:

"The truth is that we have got our way. We have got most of the things we set out to get. . . . The German navy has been handed over, and the German colonies have been given up. One of our chief trade competitors has been most seriously crippled, and our Allies are about to become her biggest creditors. That is no small achievement."

With only slight alterations these words could be used to describe the thoughts of an American capitalist statesman emerging victoriously from the present war. To be sure, Britain's navy need not be handed over; but it will be reduced to comparative feebleness in relation to that of America. Apart from that the statement is practically precise.

400,000,000 CUSTOMERS

In China, one of the biggest of all potential markets, the British capitalists still have great hopes, and these are indicated by a recent paragraph in the City page of the "Manchester Guardian":

"There is something cheering about a Reuter message from Chungking reporting the opening of the first British bank branch in Free China. . . . What avenues of wishful thinking this report opens. One day the Japanese will be thrown out of China and the world's greatest reconstruction job will begin. . . . the rivers to be dammed, the roads and railways to be built, the farms to be equipped. There is enough demand to keep all the industrial countries employed for years."

But into this market too has penetrated the sharp point of "lend-lease", and America's position across

the Pacific will be much more favourable than Britain's with two continents between.*

AMERICA REVIEWS BRITAIN'S PROBLEM

Writers in America have been much more outspoken about the total effects of all the forces that are operating to transform Britain's economic position than have any British circles. The National Planning Association of Washington, for instance, has issued a report on what it describes as "the revolution in Britain's economic position." In this they stress the two items: (a) the dissipation of Britain's overseas investments yielding about £200,000,000 annually in interest, and (b) the damage to Britain's export trade through the establishment in the importing countries of plant to make many of the things they used to buy from Britain. They do not, of course, stress the gigantic role of American competition. But the effect of this revolution, in the opinion of this body, may well be to produce an annual deficit of about £200,000,000. In reality, of course, this deficit could not be allowed to materialise as a deficit, but its equivalent in imports would have to be kept out of the country. The results of this in the war against Sir William Beveridge's Giant "Want" can be imagined. Out of a total pre-war import of about £1,000 million, £200 million would be cut down, that is 20 per cent. In other words, Field Marshall Beveridge would inevitably lose 20 of his 100 Divisions in the very first major operation of the "war against Want."

The authors of this same memorandum then go on to discuss a number of possible solutions and it is symptomatic of the real attitude of ruling class circles to "after the war" that one of these is large-scale emigration to the Dominions. And by "large-scale" they apparently mean eight to ten million people. But even this solution is given up as impracticable and the document winds up with the suggestion that British export industry may be saved by "new products and more efficient means of production." But the tide is not flowing in that direction. Antiquated British industry is becoming more antiquated in relation to American as the war continues, not less so. Even now such an elementary advance as welding instead of rivetting, particularly in shipbuilding, has not been adopted by more than a tiny fraction of British industry.

FASCISM — BRITISH CAPITALISM'S ONLY SOLUTION

The solution of its export problem to which British capitalism would inevitably and instinctively turn would be that of cutting its prices right down to the lowest possible competitive level, and it has only one way of doing this—by slashing wages ruthlessly. The cost of modernising British industry and bringing it to the level of America's industry is beyond anything that

* There is, of course, the question of how either the U.S.A. or Britain would make the Chinese and other markets sufficiently prosperous to buy their increasing supplies both of consumer goods and capital goods. But that goes beyond the scope of the present article. It is sufficient to say here, perhaps, that the matter reminds us of the contribution of Sir Joseph Cook to the discussions about intervention in Russia after the last war. "He thought the fear of Bolshevism was exaggerated. It was a movement caused by high prices. The only cure was to try to bring prices down in our own countries." This antidote to Bolshevism was distinguished by its simplicity—but also, unfortunately, by its impracticability for the capitalists.

capitalism can afford as it slides from its old position into that of a second rate power little above the level of France. But in slashing wages there is one great difficulty in the way. The British workers are still organised in great and growing trade unions, and the Labour Party is still in existence. To be sure, during the course of the war the collaboration of the leaders of the trade unions and the Labour Party with the capitalists has reached record levels of cynicism and treachery. On the surface it would appear that they could put over anything to the workers. But during the period of the war wages have not been slashed. On the contrary, many concessions have been made, and, even though it is a fact that the union leaders have opposed almost every single wage demand made during the course of the war, they have done so in a period when wages were going up, even if not at the same rate as the cost of living. Very different, however, will be the post-war period, and if they want to maintain any sort of position and exert any influence on the workers the labour and T.U. leaders will have to fight against the inevitable wage-cutting policy of the government in some sort of way. But this is just what the government and the capitalist class will not be able to tolerate. And it is precisely here that the transformation in Britain's economic position will begin to express itself politically. The whole logic of the position will force the capitalists into a direct struggle against the Labour movement, for while it is in the way they can never compete on the world market on terms that would offer them anything remotely like their previous princely rate of interest. It was not without thought that a Conservative wrote recently in the "Sunday Times" about "the smouldering fires of revolution which may yet set Europe aflame, and from which perhaps even our own country may not remain immune." The inevitable tendency of British capitalism after the war will be toward, not any high-minded war against disease, poverty, want, or anything of the sort, but toward Fascism. Nothing else is open to them if they are to live.

MEANING OF

"STATE CONTROL OF INDUSTRY"

Meantime, they brace themselves for the struggle. In the "Times" and elsewhere they have been discussing the necessity for a continuation and even extension of State control of industry after the war. It is clear that there is no major disagreement in principle on this question among the dominant section of the capitalists. The only disagreement is in relation to the machinery of control. One section apparently wants a species of complete self-government for industry, with special co-ordinating committees linking the main industrial council with the Government. Another section favours the more traditional machinery at present in operation.

Whatever attempts are made to dress this increasing measure of State control as "Socialism"—and such attempts will be made—its real purpose is clear. British capitalism is girding its loins for battle. Battle first of all against American competition; but battle also, as an essential part of that, against the British working class. Such a battle cannot be fought without the greatest possible measure of centralisation and control. For each capitalist or each combine at the present stage of imperialism's development, to carry on an individual fight would be as crazy as for each regiment to wage its own individual war. The "Times" itself points out that, "The individualist philosophy is a little fly-blown." And when this same "Times" adds: "In-

stitutions must stand or fall by the extent to which they are judged to be in the social interest" it intends the expression "social interest" to represent "capitalist interest". It also clears its plan of any charge of "Socialism" by pointing out: "We must beware of the people who advocate socialism in order to make the world safe for capitalists."

Already in North Africa the subterranean struggle between British and American imperialism has erupted above ground in political disagreements. Only the urgent need to assure the defeat of the common enemy, German imperialism, and to prepare for counter-revolutionary intervention in Europe and Asia keeps the lid clamped down on the seething, bubbling brew in the imperialist cauldron dignified by the name of "The United Nations." But that simply means that when the open struggle does come it will be all the more violent. Snatching, not at mere colonies, but at Continents; forcing open the gates of the markets of their "allies"; seizing international airports; obtaining by force, fraud and threat naval bases for the domination of the world's oceans; cutting prices, slashing wages, lowering conditions, increasing mass unemployment; driven desperate by the very fecundity of the means of production they control; the British and American imperialists will toss humanity out of the frying pan of the present war into the fire of its aftermath.

COMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WORKERS

Here then is a true picture of the post-war idyll, or at least of a section of it, for we have confined ourselves mainly to economic and trade questions. The political conclusions flowing from the economic struggle, however, are clear and, far from pointing towards a Beveridge Heaven they indicate something much closer to a Fascist Hell. However, such a capitalist future could only come to pass on the assumption that the workers proved incapable of rising to their historic responsibilities and taking the power into their own hands in order to give reality to their hope of a better future. And they will have such opportunities to do so in the coming period that that is by far the more likely alternative.

Amphion, son of Jupiter, was reputed to have built up the walls of Thebes by the music of his lyre. Joshua was reputed to have caused the walls of Jericho to crumble by the music of his trumpets. But the British capitalist class hope to outdo those feats. They bend their efforts to buttressing up the crumbling walls of their system by the music of a tin whistle playing the shrill notes of "There is a Happy Land". This in itself can only be a source of encouragement to the workers and an indication of the terror and timidity of their rulers.

But another sound is in the air. The sound of tramping feet. The war of capitalism itself is setting them on the march and already in Europe and in far-off India it rings ominously in the ears of the capitalists. The star of American capitalism may be rising, but it is rising within the framework of a world system that is falling—and falling fast. For that reason the American capitalists are all the more aware of the dangers that lie in even the smallest of revolutions at the present day.

The truly miraculous power to transform nature's raw materials into man's everyday needs which is being built up in America and to a lesser extent in Britain can either be the basis of the most profound misery and of future wars, or it can lay the foundation for

a truly great raising of the level of life throughout the world. Which road will be taken depends upon whose hand is at the wheel of the vehicle which is at present plunging humanity recklessly along the road to destruction. We have no doubt that the workers will rise to the level of this supreme task. With Engels we can turn to the capitalists and say:

"This, my lords, princes and statesmen, is where in your wisdom you have brought old Europe. And when

nothing more remains to you but to open the last great war dance—that will suit us all right. The war may perhaps push us temporarily into the background, may wrench from us many a position already conquered. But when you have unfettered forces which you will then no longer be able again to control, things may go as they will: at the end of the tragedy you will be ruined and the victory of the proletariat will either be already achieved or at any rate inevitable."

LEARN TO THINK

A Friendly Suggestion to Certain Ultra-Leftists

By LEON TROTSKY

The following article is reproduced from "Workers' International News" of August, 1938. The prognosis contained in the article has been fully confirmed by the course of the war.

The article is one of the most valuable contributions on the question of "Revolutionary Defeatism" both because of its explanation of the Leninist principle of "Revolutionary Defeatism" and its explanation of the tactical application of that principle.

A completely false attitude has been taken toward this question by certain ultra-lefts in Britain; besides this, the leadership of the I.L.P. has criticised from an un-Marxian point of view the slogan issued by Workers' International League: "The immediate dispatch of arms to the Soviet Union under the control of trade unions and factory committees." In view of this, the re-publication of the article should be timely, and a valuable aid in clarifying the ideas of socialist workers on all the questions involved.—Ed.

Certain professional ultra-left phrase-mongers are attempting at all cost to "correct" the thesis of the Secretariat of the Fourth International on war in accordance with their own ossified prejudices. They especially attack that part of the thesis which states that in all imperialist countries the revolutionary party, while remaining in irreconcilable opposition to its own government in time of war, should, nevertheless, mould its practical politics in each country to the internal situation and to the international groupings, sharply differentiating a workers' state from a bourgeois states, a colonial country from an imperialist country.

The proletariat of a capitalist country which finds itself in an alliance with the U.S.S.R.¹ [states the thesis] must retain fully and completely its irreconcilable hostility to the imperialist government of its own country. In this sense its policy will not differ from that of the proletariat in a country fighting against the U.S.S.R. But in the nature of practical actions considerable differences may arise depending on the concrete war situation. ("War and the Fourth International", p. 21, § 44.)

The ultra-leftists consider this postulate, the correctness of which has been confirmed by the entire course of development, as the starting point of social-patriotism.² Since the attitude toward imperialist governments should be "the same" in all countries, these strategists ban any distinctions beyond the boundaries of their own imperialist country. Theoretically their mistake arises from an attempt to construct fundamentally different bases for war-time and peace-time policies.

Let us assume that rebellion breaks out tomorrow in the French colony of Algeria under the banner of national independence and that the Italian government, motivated by its own imperialist interests, prepares to send weapons to the rebels. What should the attitude of the Italian workers be in this case? I have purposely taken an example of rebellion against a democratic imperialism with intervention on the side of the rebels from a fascist imperialism. Should the Italian workers prevent the shipping of arms to the Algerians? Let any ultra-leftists dare answer this question in the affirmative. Every revolutionist, together with the Italian workers and the rebellious Algerians, would spurn such an answer with indignation. Even if a general maritime strike broke out in fascist Italy at the same time, even in this case the strikers should make an exception in favour of those ships carrying aid to the colonial slaves in revolt; otherwise they would be no more than wretched trade unionists—not proletarian revolutionists.

At the same time, the French maritime workers, even though not faced with any strike whatsoever, would be compelled to exert every effort to block the shipment of ammunition intended for use against the rebels. Only such a policy on the part of the Italian and French

¹ We can leave aside here the question of the class character of the U.S.S.R. We are interested in the question of policy in relation to a workers' state in general or to a colonial country fighting for its independence. So far as the class nature of the U.S.S.R. is concerned we can incidentally recommend to the ultra-leftists that they gaze upon themselves in the mirror of A. Ciliga's book, "In the Country of the Big Lie." This ultra-left author, completely lacking any Marxist schooling, pursues his idea to the very end, that is, to liberal-anarchic abstraction.

² Mrs. Simone Weil even writes that our position is the same as Plekhanov's in 1914-1918. Simone Weil, of course, has a right to understand nothing. Yet it is not necessary to abuse this right.

workers constitutes the policy of revolutionary, internationalism.

Does this not signify, however, that the Italian workers moderate their struggle in this case against the fascist regime? Not in the slightest. Fascism renders "aid" to the Algerians only in order to weaken its enemy, France, and to lay its rapacious hand on her colonies. The revolutionary Italian workers do not forget this for a single moment. They call upon the Algerians not to trust their treacherous "ally" and at the same time continue their own irreconcilable struggle against fascism, "the main enemy in their own country". Only in this way can they gain the confidence of the rebels, help the rebellion and strengthen their own revolutionary position.

If the above is correct in peace-time, why does it become false in war-time? Everyone knows the postulate of the famous German military theoretician, Clausewitz, that war is the continuation of politics by other means. This profound thought leads naturally to the conclusion that the struggle against war is but the continuation of the general proletarian struggle during peace-time. Does the proletariat in peace-time reject and sabotage all the acts and measures of the bourgeois government? Even during a strike which embraces an entire city, the workers take measures to insure the delivery of food to their own districts, make sure that they have water, that the hospitals do not suffer, etc. Such measures are dictated not by opportunism in relation to the bourgeoisie but by concern for the interests of the strike itself, by concern for the sympathy of the submerged city masses, etc. These elementary rules of proletarian strategy in peace-time retain full force in time of war as well.

An irreconcilable attitude against bourgeois militarism does not signify at all that the proletariat in all cases enters into a struggle against its own "national" army. At least the workers would not interfere with soldiers who are extinguishing a fire or rescuing drowning people during a flood; on the contrary, they would help side by side with the soldiers and fraternise with them. And the question is not exhausted merely by cases of elemental calamities. If the French fascists should make an attempt today at a coup d'état and the Daladier government found itself forced to move troops against the fascists, the revolutionary workers, while maintaining their complete political independence, would fight against the fascists alongside of these troops. Thus in a number of cases the workers are forced not only to permit and tolerate, but actively to support the practical measures of the bourgeois government.

In ninety cases out of a hundred the workers actually place a minus sign where the bourgeoisie places a plus sign. In ten cases however they are forced to fix the same sign as the bourgeoisie but with their own seal, in which is expressed their mistrust of the bourgeoisie. The policy of the proletariat is not at all automatically derived from the policy of the bourgeoisie, bearing only the opposite sign—this would make every sectarian a master strategist; no, the revolutionary party must each time orient itself independently in the internal as well as the external situation, arriving at those decisions which correspond best to the interests of the proletariat. This rule applies just as much to the war period as to the period of peace.

Let us imagine that in the next European war the Belgian proletariat conquers power sooner than the proletariat of France. Undoubtedly Hitler will try to crush proletarian Belgium. In order to cover up its own flank, the French bourgeois government might find itself compelled to help the Belgian workers' government with

arms. The Belgian soviets of course reach for these arms with both hands. But actuated by the principle of defeatism, perhaps the French workers ought to block their bourgeoisie from shipping arms to proletarian Belgium? Only direct traitors or out-and-out idiots can reason thus.

The French bourgeoisie could send arms to proletarian Belgium only out of fear of the greatest military danger and only in expectation of later crushing the proletarian revolution with their own weapons. To the French workers, on the contrary, proletarian Belgium is the greatest support in the struggle against their own bourgeoisie. The outcome of the struggle would be decided, in the final analysis, by the relationship of forces, into which correct policies enter as a very important factor. The revolutionary party's first task is to utilise the contradiction between two imperialist countries, France and Germany, in order to save proletarian Belgium.

Ultra-left scholastics think not in concrete terms but in empty abstractions. They have transformed the idea of defeatism into such a vacuum. They can see vividly neither the process of war nor the process of revolution. They seek a hermetically sealed formula which excludes fresh air. But a formula of this kind can offer no orientation for the proletarian vanguard.

To carry the class struggle to its highest form—civil war—this is the task of defeatism. But this task can be solved only through the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses, that is, by widening, deepening, and sharpening those revolutionary methods which constitute the content of class struggle in "peace"-time. The proletarian party does not resort to artificial methods, such as burning warehouses, setting off bombs, wrecking trains, etc., in order to bring about the defeat of its own government. Even if it were successful on this road, the military defeat would not at all lead to revolutionary success, a success which can be assured only by the independent movement of the proletariat. Revolutionary defeatism signifies only that in its class struggle the proletarian party does not stop at any "patriotic" considerations, since defeat of its own imperialist government, brought about, or hastened by the revolutionary movement of the masses is an incomparably lesser evil than victory gained at the price of national unity, that is, the political prostration of the proletariat. Therein lies the complete meaning of defeatism and this meaning is entirely sufficient.

The methods of struggle change, of course, when the struggle enters the openly revolutionary phase. Civil war is a war, and in this aspect has its particular laws. In civil war, bombing of warehouses, wrecking of trains and all other forms of military "sabotage" are inevitable. Their appropriateness is decided by purely military considerations—civil war continues revolutionary politics but by other, precisely, military means.

However during an imperialist war there may be cases where a revolutionary party will be forced to resort to military-technical means, though they do not as yet follow directly from the revolutionary movement in their own country. Thus, if it is a question of sending arms or troops against a workers' government or a rebellious colony, not only such methods as boycott and strike, but direct military sabotage may become entirely practical and obligatory. Resorting or not resorting to such measures will be a matter of practical possibilities. If the Belgian workers, conquering power in war-time, have their own military agents on German soil, it would be the duty of these agents not to hesitate at any technical means in order to stop Hitler's troops. It is absolutely clear that the revolutionary German workers also are duty-bound (if they are able) to perform this task in the interests of the Belgian revolution, irrespective of

the general course of the revolutionary movement in Germany itself.

Defeatist policy, that is, the policy of irreconcilable class struggle in war-time cannot consequently be "the same" in all countries, just as the policy of the proletariat cannot be the same in peace-time. Only the Comintern of the epigones has established a regime in which the parties of all countries break into march simultaneously with the left foot. In struggle against this bureaucratic cretinism we have attempted more than once to prove that the general principles and tasks must be realised in each country in accordance with its internal and external conditions. This principle retains its complete force for war-time as well.

Those ultra-leftists who do not want to think as Marxists, that is, concretely, will be caught unawares by war. Their policy in time of war will be a fatal crowning of their policy in peace-time. The first artillery shots will either blow the ultra-leftists into political non-existence, or else drive them into the camp of social-patriotism, exactly like the Spanish anarchists, who, absolute "deniers" of the state, found themselves from the same causes bourgeois ministers when war came. In order to carry on a correct policy in war-time one must learn to think correctly in time of peace.

Leon TROTSKY.

Coyoacan, D.F., May 22, 1938.

"Friends" of India

By AJIT ROY

That theory and practice go together is a fundamental proposition of Marxism. And in the working-class movement muddle-headedness and woolly thinking, albeit coupled with the noblest of intentions, can produce more harm than a deliberate reactionary policy. Nowhere is the need for clear theory and precision in policy more imperative than on the Indian question.

For, the truth is that the so-called well-wishers of India in Britain have probably done more to prevent in this country a true appreciation of the Indian problem than even the propaganda of Churchill, Amery and the true-blue Tories. Each Indian crisis has produced its inevitable crop of sympathisers and well-wishers of the Indian people—pacifists and parsons, journalists and writers, professors and philosophers, ex-civil servants, Liberal and Labour M.P.'s, leaders of the I.L.P.; a motley collection of individuals have grouped themselves together under the somewhat derisive title, "**Friends of India**". And the current crisis has been no exception. At the present moment, these "Friends" are to be found gathered round the "**Aid to India Committee**" sponsored by the I.L.P. and the Pacifists, and the "**India League**" supported and dominated by the Stalinists.

The basic characteristic of all these "Committees" and "Leagues" is the extreme modest requirements for conditions of membership. They do not demand that one should be opposed to imperialism as such; but if one is so opposed then it is not held against him as a crime! You can be Tory, Liberal, Labour, Stalinist or a member of the I.L.P.; you can be pre-war or anti-war; these differences are of little consequence so long as you are prepared to "express" your sense of horror at what is taking place in India. In these assemblies, therefore, one finds as rich a collection of diverse political tendencies as ever gladdened the heart of a Stalinist functionary hunting for "unity" and "broad movements".

Here, sitting next to Brockway, Mr. Edward Thompson, the Liberal journalist, gives sober advice to the Tories on the desirability of reopening negotiations with the Congress leaders in order to save British rule from the twin danger of foreign invasion and a Red Revolution. In a paper "Free India", published and issued by

the "Indian Freedom Campaign Committee of the British Centre Against Imperialism", Thompson refers to the war as "our war", talks about "our propaganda on India" and declares that "everything now depends on the new Viceroy and his instructions". But neither his unconcealed imperialist outlook nor his malicious jibes at the socialist organisations in India, prevent in any way the professed anti-imperialists represented by Reginald Reynolds, Brockway and other I.L.P. leaders from solidarising with him in the same organisation. Lack of principle, apparently, is the basic feature of these types of organisations. And since this unprincipled unity would be shattered at the very mention of a **concrete policy** to help the Indian struggle, policy discussion is not encouraged. As Reginald Reynolds declared: on the Indian question it is desirable and possible to have the widest form of unity of all sections of opinions and one must beware of the activities of splitters who would disrupt this unity.

But mere lamentations about either British censorship or British butchery in India can bring no help to the struggling masses of India. The exploitation of the Indian masses is the corner-stone of British imperialism. It is for the maintenance of their hold over the millions in India, Africa and the Far East that Churchill and the ruling class are fighting. The battlefields of Tripoli and Tunisia may be far removed from the Indian scene but it is India, Burma, Malaya and China which invests these battles with their historic meaning and significance. The suppression of the Indian masses and "the war for Democracy" are part and parcel of one and the same process. Those who cannot see this can see nothing. Imperialism in India cannot be fought and real aid delivered to the Indian masses except by irreconcilable struggle against British capitalism represented by the Churchill government. Only by participating in the socialist task of mobilising the British workers against capitalism and for workers' power can the "Friends of India" prove their genuineness and sincerity. An alliance between socialist and capitalist elements, sacrificing as it inevitably does, the principle of class struggle, can at best be a fraud against not only the Indian masses but also the British proletariat.

But then, we may be asked, does not propaganda mean something? Surely men of different opinions can write to make known to the British people the truth about the British Raj. Is not ignorance one of the main obstacles to the establishment of a solid bond of unity between the workers of Britain and the people of India?

The necessity and importance of the widest dissemination of anti-imperialist propaganda cannot be too strongly emphasised. Such propaganda by exposing the brutal realities of imperialist exploitation, helps to destroy the illusions about the Empire which the ruling class so sedulously fosters. Such propaganda is one of the most potent weapons in rousing the anger and hatred of the workers against capitalism. That is why in the revolutionary sections of the workers' press anti-imperialist news has always occupied, and will continue to occupy, an important place. And that is why the reformist and Stalinist press of today is so noticeably silent on Indian and colonial matters. But such propaganda can aid the Indian struggle for freedom only to the extent that it becomes an argument for independent working-class action leading to the overthrow of imperialism. To the extent that the propaganda fails to raise, or blurs over, the fundamental class issues, and degenerates into a demand that Churchill should change his policy, it becomes an instrument of reaction. For it leads to the illusion that it is possible to aid the Indian struggle while congratulating Churchill on his victories, or that it is possible to fight for the national freedom of India within the framework of "national unity" in Britain.

The revolutionary workers within the ranks of the I.L.P. must needs ask themselves "Where does the leadership really stand on the issue of unity with the Indian peoples?" If solidarity with the Indian struggle is to be anything more than a gesture and a doubtful one at that, then the leadership must break with the pro-war "Friends of India". The I.L.P. condemns the Stalinist leadership for its betrayal of the Indian people; but in what does this betrayal consist? Surely not the reluctance to express sympathy with the Indian people or to condemn the reign of terror. The essence of the Stalinist betrayal consists in their political support for Churchill and the capitalist class. But in what way does the alliance of the I.L.P. leadership with the open imperialism represented by Thompson or the more camouflaged type represented by Ballard, Secretary of the so-called "British Centre Against Imperialism", differ in essence from the Pollitt-Churchill tie-up. Both are equally opposed to socialist principles.

But this opportunism of the I.L.P. leaders on the Indian issue is not an accident. It arises from the absence of that deep internationalism which is the basis of all genuine proletarian parties. Internationalism is the core and essence of the proletarian struggle. To Lenin and Trotsky, the unity between the socialist movement of the Western proletariat and the national movement of the colonial countries was of a two-fold character.

In the first place, the struggle of the oppressed masses in the colonies for freedom constitutes powerful blows directed against the entire world-structure of monopoly-

capitalism and give immense aid to the working-classes in the imperialist countries fighting for Socialism. In the second place, they regarded the independent political role of the colonial proletariat and its leadership of the national revolution as the pre-condition to its victory. That is why Lenin and Trotsky considered the development of the Communist International in India and the colonial countries as one of the urgent tasks of the Russian and the international proletariat. In their eyes, the strivings and experiences of the Indian proletariat even in its formative period was as much a part of the international proletarian movement as the activities of the mass parties in the advanced capitalist countries. The direct participation of the vanguard of the Western proletariat, represented by the Communist International in the days of its revolutionary glory, in the activities and experiences of the youthful proletarian movements in the colonial countries profoundly affected the rapid development of these proletarian colonial organisations as distinct from and independent of the reformist organisations of the native bourgeoisie.

The idea that the British workers must not interfere with the internal composition of the Indian national movement or its domestic disputes is completely alien to the spirit and traditions of international revolutionary socialism. Socialists in Britain have the duty and responsibility to intervene in the activities of the Indian proletariat; to advise, and be advised by the Indian socialists.

This is the essence of internationalism. Trotskyism has continued this tradition of Bolshevism, and the result is to be seen not only in the development of fresh and virile organisations of the colonial proletariat out of the wrecks of Stalinism, in Ceylon, China and India, but also in a great strengthening in the ideological basis of the socialist vanguard in this country. When Reginald Reynolds, therefore, brazenly declares that it would be impudent for British socialists to argue over the domestic disputes in the Indian movement for national independence what he really means is that the proletariat in Britain must remain indifferent to the problems of their Indian brothers. This is a complete repudiation of international socialism and is characteristic of that petty-bourgeois literary socialism which Reynolds represents. And if today the leaders of the I.L.P. find it so easy on the Indian question to fraternise with men who only an hour before were fraternising with Churchill, it is also because of the absence of that internationalism which is the reflection of the indissoluble unity which has knit together the proletariat of all lands.

It is not an accident that the "sectarian" Fourth International alone of all organisations has succeeded in bringing significant sections of the colonial workers within the framework of one international organisation. It is not the Trotskyists but the compromisers who are the real sectarians. For, under the pretext of achieving "the broadest possible form of unity" on the Indian question they have managed to tie themselves up with imperialism, however unwittingly, and built a wall between themselves and the Indian masses. Before the I.L.P. can genuinely fight for unity with the Indian masses it must break with the opportunists inside and outside its ranks.

The National Struggle in Europe

A Discussion Article

By *MARC LORIS*

With the American Civil War, the Italian wars of unification, Prussia's wars against Austria and France, the third quarter of the Nineteenth Century marks the end of the epoch of the formation of the great bourgeois states. This does not mean that national questions ceased to preoccupy humanity. Far from it. The uneven development of capitalism appears in this realm as in others.

A GLANCE INTO THE PAST

The national problem was sharply posed then for a number of peoples in central and south-eastern Europe. Leaving aside the Irish struggle, the Alsatian problem of Germany, the Catalan and Basque questions in Spain, there were the oppressed nationalities of the two great semi-feudal empires, Austria-Hungary and Russia, as well as those that came out of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. The national problem in Europe thus appeared essentially as a vestige of the great historical task of emancipation which had been created by the transition from feudalism to capitalism but which the latter had been unable to resolve completely.

The development of imperialism soon raised the national question in another group of countries, the colonial countries (or semi-colonial such as China and Persia). While liberals of all kinds were able to comfort themselves by thinking that the national problem in Europe was merely a historical lag which would catch up more or less quickly, the formation of the colonial empires soon demonstrated that the national question arose inevitably from the **most modern** phase of capitalism, finance imperialism. However, the colonial developments could also be interpreted as part of the historical lag, representing a historical rise toward the national state, evoked by the development of the productive forces in the colonies under the impact of capitalism.

Shaking the great multi-national empires, crushing the small nations between the large, the first imperialist world war revived the national problem in Europe, giving it a new acuteness in the countries where it had not been settled (Austria-Hungary, Russia), or reviving it in the countries where history had long ago disposed of it (occupied Belgium). Against those who, under various pretexts, denied or minimised the importance of the national questions in our epoch (Luxemburg, Radek, Bukharin, Piatakov), Lenin wrote many times during the last war: "Imperialism is the epoch of the oppression

of nations on a new historical basis . . . Imperialism renews the old slogan of self-determination."

Lenin's basic idea was that, contrary to the expectations of the liberals, capitalist development exacerbated national oppression. In the revolutionary ranks there were many people who tried to ignore the problems of national freedom, at least in Europe, under the pretext that imperialism made all national freedoms a Utopia and an illusion. To Bukharin, who denied the possibility of European national movements, Lenin replied that, as far as the national question is concerned, Bukharin "has not proved and will not prove the distinction between colonies and oppressed nations in Europe." Of course, Lenin, better than anyone else, knew how to show the opposition between imperialist Europe and the oppressed colonial world. But he denied the **absolute** character of that opposition. He showed that the imperialist epoch not only revived the unresolved national problems in Europe, but was even able to give birth to new ones. For example, in a polemic against the Polish partisans of Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin mentioned hypothetically, in 1916, the possibility of occupied Belgium rising against Germany for its emancipation. At the same time Trotsky wrote: "The independence of the Belgians, Serbians, Poles, Armenians and others . . . belongs to the programme of the fight of the international proletariat against imperialism." He did not hesitate to place a crushed imperialist nation of western Europe on the same plane as the colonial peoples of the Orient.

For Lenin, the intensification of the national problem in Europe proper was not the fortuitous result of some military accident such as the superiority of the German armies. It had a much deeper cause. It sprang from the very nature of imperialism. Kautsky had attempted to explain imperialism by the need of industrial countries to combine with agrarian countries—a theory which obscured the violent and reactionary character of imperialism by presenting it as some sort of international division of labour. Lenin, refuting Kautsky, wrote in his book on "Imperialism":

"The characteristic feature of imperialism is precisely that it strives to annex **not only** agricultural regions, but even highly industrialised regions (German appetite for Belgium, French appetite for Lorraine), because (1) the fact that the world is already divided up obliges those contemplating a **new** division to reach out for **any kind** of territory, and (2) because an essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between a number of great powers in the striving for hegemony, i.e., for the conquest of territory, not so much directly for themselves as to weaken the adversary and undermine his hegemony (Belgium is chiefly

necessary to Germany as a base for operations against England; England needs Bagdad as a base for operations against Germany, etc.)”

These lines are profoundly true, perhaps even more today than when they were written: 1. They explain the special features of colony-starved German imperialism; “The fact that the world is already divided up obliges those contemplating a new division to reach out for any kind of territory.” 2. They also show that at present all conquest has a strategical-military and economic character at the same time and that it is impossible to establish a clear distinction between the two. 3. Moreover, Lenin did not hesitate to place the occupation of a crushed small imperialist country (Belgium) and the conquest of a colony (Bagdad) on the same plane by showing that they both have the same deep cause, which is “the characteristic feature of imperialism.” These three points are all equally important for the understanding of the epoch through which we are passing.

THE NATIONAL PROBLEM IN EUROPE TODAY

To destroy the absolute character of the assertions of the sectarians, Lenin, in his polemics on the national question, often had to indicate **possibilities** of historical development. These possibilities have today become **realities**. If during the last war the national problem in Europe had a fragmentary character, today it embraces the whole continent. The second imperialist war is the continuation of the first, but on a much larger scale. Notwithstanding the participation of America and Japan on the side of the Allies, the war of 1914-18 remained essentially a European war. The present war is world-wide in the full sense of the word. Just as for the Kaiser the occupation of Belgium was merely a preparatory operation for the serious struggle against France, so for Hitler the occupation of the European continent was only the prelude to the struggle against the British Empire, against the USSR and especially against America. Now all Europe is an invaded Belgium. Germany's sensational victories caused all land fronts in western or south-eastern Europe to disappear. Not counting some of Germany's allies whose situation is not very different from that of a conquered territory, nearly 250 million non-Germans are now under the Nazi boot. An enormous quantitative difference from the last war! But there is also a qualitative difference. In the last war occupied Belgium was emptied of the most active part of her population, who went to France. Few remained in the country but aged men, women and children. Today the entire population of a dozen countries must live, work and suffer under the Hitlerian satraps.

The Europe of 1939 was no longer the Europe of 1914. It had been considerably impoverished. In the impasse of bourgeois society, all the social and national antagonisms had become exacerbated to an unprecedented degree. On the other hand, the war is now conducted on a world-wide scale. The absence of a historical way out on a capitalist basis, the sharpness of a struggle whose stakes are all or nothing, the reactionary political nature of Nazism—all this has led German imperialism to subject the invaded countries to a brutal exploitation and a barbarous oppression never before seen in the history of modern Europe. And this has also driven the peoples onto the road of resistance and revolt.

It is no longer a question of theoretically deducing the possibility of a national problem in Europe which had

resolved the greater part of this problem long ago. One has only to open one's eyes to ascertain the existence of national movements, moreover on a scale never before equalled in Europe. Fascism, “imperialism in its chemically pure form,” concentrates and combines all forms of national oppression which have been observed up to the present in the colonies: forced labour, huge transfers of workers and farmers, mass evictions, privileges for members of the dominating nation (special courts, more abundant food rations, etc.); villages razed by punitive expeditions, etc. In the face of this reality, only an incurable pedant could deny the possibility of the existence of a national movement in Europe under the pretence that we are now in the epoch of imperialism. Actually, such reasoning reveals only a total lack of comprehension of imperialism, of its violent, reactionary and self-destructive character. Under a mask of radicalism, this argument betrays an inertia of thought inherited from liberalism. Similar reasoning, current among all types of liberals, denied some years ago the possibility of fascism in Germany: A highly industrialised country, just imagine! Fascist reaction is only possible in peripheral countries, little developed, semi-agrarian. . . . Such mentality betrays a complete lack of understanding of our epoch. In reality, we are no longer in the period of the rise, nor even at the apogee of the capitalist system, but in its decline. All bourgeois society is decomposing, putrefying, and this disintegration brings us many new things, “even in Europe.” Fascism came. Now it is the national oppression of 250 millions in countries where history had, for most of them, long ago solved this problem.

The problem raised today by German imperialism can tomorrow be raised by American imperialism. In case of a German defeat, and delay of the proletarian revolution, American domination over Europe, as it deepens, will take new forms. Instead of the previous method of financial preponderance, it will seek political supremacy supported by military means. The “second front” can become the prelude to the occupation of the continent by American troops. Blackmail by means of food and credits will be completed by the establishment of a Yankee police power. If the proletarian revolution does not conquer shortly, the national problem will be installed in a ruined Europe for many years to come.

Thus the national movement in Europe is not merely the product of an accidental military episode, but flows from the whole imperialist decline. And it assumes great historical significance. If Hitler had been able to unify Europe, the proletarian revolution would have appeared much more remote. The abolition of the frontiers would have opened the way, on the basis of capitalism, to a new development of the productive forces on the European continent. But Hitler could not accomplish for Europe what Bismarck once accomplished for Germany. It is precisely this present movement of resistance that clearly shows the historical impasse in which Nazism, the most advanced political form of imperialism, finds itself. Thus in a certain sense, the movement of resistance of the oppressed peoples represents the historical interests of the development of mankind. It is the harbinger and the guarantee of a new march forward.

To confirm the existence of a European national movement does not mean to identify in every respect this present national problem with the national questions of the past in Europe or even of the present in the colonies. Germany's occupation of Europe has raised a national problem “sui generis”; it is the movement of resistance of the peoples in those imperialist nations crushed by

a more powerful imperialism in the epoch of the death agony of capitalism.

We must note here, in order to try to understand what is going on in Europe, that the Nazi administration in the conquered countries greatly differs from a traditional military occupation (for example, the Prussians in France in 1871). Certain territories have been incorporated formally into Germany; others (General Government of Poland, Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia) have a colonial status, with no promise of future liberation. But even in the countries which are formally merely under military administration (Belgium, Occupied France), the Nazis have taken a great number of economic, political and social measures which surpass by far the requirements of a simple military occupation (for instance the measures against the Jews).

THE SLOGAN OF NATIONAL FREEDOM

Any national struggle is also, to varying degrees, a social struggle. This is particularly true of the present movement of resistance in Europe. Under the weight of oppression, the hatred, the rage and the despair accumulated in the conquered countries have poured out in the most diverse forms of revolt, and representatives of the most varied social circles are swept along in the movement. But if one considers the whole, it appears clearly that the focus of the resistance is in the labouring masses, the workers and, in central and south-eastern Europe, the peasants. The Nazis have, in general, easily found a common language with the big industrial and financial bourgeoisie, which is terrorised by its fear of communism and is looking for a way to save what it can of its profits and privileges. The most typical case is France. With the middle and petty bourgeoisie of the towns the Nazis have had much less success; they have, however, found political collaborators, fascist adventurers and, above all, functionaries of the former regime who stay at the side of the representatives of "order." Around the Nazis also have gravitated a certain number of go-betweens, profiteers, black market speculators and "nouveaux riches". But the more deeply one penetrates the popular masses, the more one feels the fierce hatred for the invader, the more universal is the opposition to Nazism.

It is interesting to note, in this connection, the recent statement of Andre Philip, former French Deputy who escaped from Lyons some weeks ago and who, upon his arrival in London, was appointed by De Gaulle a member of the Fighting French National Committee. Philip's testimony is important first because he is a Gaullist, thus our political adversary, also because he just recently left France where he was in close contact with the resistance movement, and finally because he is, in general, an honest observer. On his arrival in London he declared:

"The great mass of resistance is constituted by the workers. The peasants are hostile to Vichy but they are still dispersed. Traitors and collaborators have been recruited only among big businessmen and the wealthier class. The middle class and the representatives of the small and medium industries are generally favourable to us: they do what they can, at grips with tremendous difficulties."

The last sentence sounds like an excuse for the lack of activity on the part of these middle class circles. Are we witnessing a struggle of the bourgeoisie in the midst of the indifference of the masses? No, it is exactly the contrary. Even the workers' opposition to the native bourgeoisie, which does not hesitate to collaborate when

it sees some profit in it, is part of the national struggle. National sentiment, long monopolised by the ruling class to better assure its domination and extend its rapine, is now a revolutionary ferment which is stirring up the masses against the existing order.

The social character of the movement is also particularly clear in Poland. There, in the towns at least, resistance to the German oppression is led by socialist workers' groups who have only hate for the pre-war regime and only contempt for the government-in-exile at London. This feature of the movement does not prevent it, however, from unfolding under the slogan of independence of the country. And with reason! In all the invaded countries all the political and even the economic questions gravitate around the central problem: the presence of a foreign master. All the democratic tasks, so important at the present moment, take on an abstract and unreal character if they are not crowned with the demand for national freedom. The economic struggles likewise raise the problem of the independence of the country: even in unoccupied France the population well knows that the lack of food is due to German plundering.

The elementary duty of Marxists is to write into their programme the demand for national freedom which, although it had long lost all content for most of the European countries, has now been given a new reality by the catastrophes of the death agony of capitalism. For us it is not merely a question of a "trick" in order to "take advantage" of the present aspirations of the masses, but of sincerely and honestly recognising an elementary principle of democratic rights. The Marxist proposes to fight for its realisation in the same way that he solves all tasks, by revolutionary methods, and not by allying himself with one of the imperialist camps. To have a negative attitude toward the independence of a country is to abandon the working masses and the labouring people in general to the dangers of reactionary nationalist demagogy.

Europe is not on the eve of a new wave of national bourgeois revolutions, but of socialist proletarian revolutions. But such is the dialectic of history that the capitalist system is revealing its bankruptcy to a number of peoples in the form of a new national oppression. Toward the present movement of resistance three attitudes are possible. The first is to see in it a sort of reactionary Vendee, menacing the Nazi work of "unification" of Europe. Only Hitler's lackeys take such a position which amounts to according fascism some progressive features. The second attitude is indifference—the present situation is "temporary" and besides, very complex; let's wait for better times. Needless to say, this has nothing in common with Bolshevism. The third is to recognise the explosive character of a popular national movement in the present-day Europe. Independently of the present consciousness of the movement, objectively, it opens the way to the proletarian revolution. "The dialectics of history is such," wrote Lenin in 1916, "that small nations, powerless as an independent factor in the struggle against imperialism, play a part as one of the ferments, one of the bacilli, which help the real power against imperialism to come on the scene, namely, the socialist proletariat."

And, certain people may object, the imperialist war? Can we support the demand for national freedom in Europe while the present war is going on? Doesn't this mean adhering to one of the imperialist camps? If, after the conclusion of the peace, the state of oppression would continue for some European countries then, doubtless, we would have to inscribe on our flag national freedom for those peoples. But can we do it now

without participating "ipso facto" in the imperialist war?

The situation certainly would be much more simple if there were national oppression in Europe without imperialist war. But unfortunately our epoch is far from being simple and it is precisely the imperialist war that revives national oppression. The reasoning that would make us wait for the end of the war suffers from a fatal formalism. This is clearly shown if we take the example of Czechoslovakia. The non-German territories of Bohemia and Moravia became a German "protectorate" before the present war broke out. We would then have had to stand for national freedom of the Czechs, to abandon this demand at the moment of the declaration of war and to take it up again at the conclusion of the peace. But that is not all. An imperialist peace would be hardly distinguishable from the war. We are in an epoch of convulsion where the line between war and peace will become more and more faint. The present war can be and doubtless will be succeeded by other military operations; intra-European, colonial, among the former allies, against new proletarian powers, etc. Exactly when will the formalists "authorise" us to take up again the demand for national freedom?

All this formalism comes from a lack of understanding of the nature of the present national movements and of our support. In spite of its great importance at this hour, national independence remains a democratic demand. As such, we fight for its realisation, **but with our own methods**, and we integrate it into our programme of socialist revolution. If tomorrow Hitler attacks Sweden or Switzerland, we would give no support to the Swedish or Swiss bourgeois governments; just as we have not supported the Norwegian, Yugoslav or Greek governments, for such support can gain absolutely nothing for socialism or even for democracy. But if, in case of military defeat, when the bourgeois state is crushed; a popular national movement of resistance to German oppression springs up, we would support it, for such a movement, objectively, clears the road to the revolution. Our support does not depend upon the formal question of the moment—during or after the imperialist war—but on the political and social nature of the movement. As long as it is a real movement of revolt of the masses against oppression, it is our elementary duty to support it and, of course, this support can in no way signify political participation in the imperialist war.

The "second front" may be adduced against our slogan. It is quite likely that some day or other the United Nations will land in Europe. In this case, as long as a country is divided by a military front, the slogan of national freedom loses all revolutionary content. But to confuse the reality of today with the possibility of tomorrow is a serious fault in revolutionary tactics.

But, after all, cannot the cry of national freedom be used as an instrument in the hands of Anglo-American imperialism and its satellites to chain the peoples to the imperialist war? Undoubtedly! But is there **one** democratic demand that has never been utilized by the bourgeoisie to camouflage its aims and deceive the masses? Not a single one! The task of Marxists is not to abandon the democratic demands because the bourgeoisie tries to hide its foul face behind them, but to defend them by revolutionary means and to integrate them into the socialist reconstruction of society, as long as these demands correspond to the aspirations and the revolutionary interests of the great mass of people.

To reveal the falsity of the argument, one merely has to turn it around: if the demand for national freedom

plays into the hands of Anglo-American imperialism, then, inversely, ignoring or underestimating the national problem in Europe plays into the hands of German imperialism. All across Europe the Nazis and their lackeys console the starved and terrorised people with the picture of a unified Europe. Hurry to integrate yourself into this unity in order to receive all its benefits! An end to these puerile reactions of reactionary nationalism, today outmoded by the necessities of modern economy! This propaganda has not been without effect on quite a large number of pacifists, socialists and communists, who now greet Nazism as the realisation of the socialist unification of Europe.

But isn't "national freedom" the return to the status quo ante, that is, to the bourgeois regime? Lenin long ago ridiculed this argument when he answered those partisans of Rosa Luxemburg who opposed, according to his own words, a "national rebellion in annexed Belgium, Serbia, Galicia, Armenia":

"... our Polish comrades are opposed to such a rebellion on the ground that there is also a bourgeoisie in the annexed countries, and this bourgeoisie also oppresses other nations, or rather, it may oppress them, since the only point under discussion is 'right to oppress.' It appears, then, that the criterion of a given war, or a given rebellion, is not its real social content (the struggle of an oppressed nation against the oppressor for liberation), but the possibility of the now oppressed bourgeoisie exercising its 'right' to oppress."

But doesn't the slogan of national liberation destroy proletarian internationalism? In particular, doesn't it hinder all fraternisation of workers in conquered territories with the German soldiers and workers, without whose action any revolution in Europe is unthinkable? The cry of freedom of the peoples has nothing in common with the thirst for imperialist revenge. How can a German soldier free himself from the ideological hold of Nazism if he has not recognised honestly and without equivocation the right of the oppressed peoples to their freedom? The most elementary duty, not only of a German socialist worker or soldier, but of a sincere democrat (if this variety still exists) is to desire, to hail and to help the revolt of the oppressed peoples.

NATIONAL FREEDOM AND SOCIALISM LEARN TO THINK

The slogan of national liberation in no way implies a programme of restoration of a divided Europe. It means purely and simply that each people must be free to determine its own destiny and that the revolutionary party supports the struggle for this elementary freedom. The oppression of the peoples of Europe by German imperialism is a barbarous and reactionary undertaking. Resistance to the enslavement of the nations is at present a great progressive factor which, objectively, opens the way to the proletarian revolution. The revolutionary party must support and guide the painful efforts of the European peoples to tear themselves free from German domination. Such is the content of the slogan of national liberation. It is the simple expression of the struggle against oppression.

But, after the collapse of the Hitlerian empire, Europe must unite if it wishes to live. If this fundamental task is not accomplished, there will be new wars and new oppressions. Europe's only hope is the economic unification of the continent, combined with freedom

of national development for each people. And only the proletariat is capable of undertaking such a task. The proletariat will accomplish this by establishing the Socialist United States of Europe. However, only free peoples can unite. The first condition of a federation of European nations is their independence from the foreign yoke. If the national problems of Europe can only be resolved in a socialist federation, then inversely, this federation can only be achieved among free and equal nations. Far from being in opposition to each other, the two slogans, National Liberation and Socialist United States of Europe, are closely connected.

At the present time, when the Nazis are trying to justify their crimes in the name of "European unity," it is especially important not to counterpose the federation against the nation, but to present it for what it really will be, a form of organisation and of guarantee of national freedom. Those who oppose to the slogan of national liberation the "purely socialist" formula of United States of Europe fail to notice that this formula is itself a compromise, a compromise between the centralising necessities of a planned economy and the centrifugal tendencies inherited from past centuries, which cannot be erased in a few months or a few years. The United States implies states. The complete economic and political unification of the continent will not be made in a day, but will be the product of a whole historical epoch and will largely depend, moreover, on what happens in the rest of the world. At what tempo and in what precise forms will this development be effected? Experience will tell. The slogan of Socialist United States of Europe merely gives the general algebraic formula. Moreover, let us note in passing, the disappearance of the borders between the different states will go hand in hand with the withering away of each state.

The clearest example of federation which led to an almost complete unity is the United States of America. But the building up of the federal power was a long process and it took a rather serious civil war to consolidate it definitively. Of course, socialism will have other methods than capitalism. However, the example of the United States shows us how artificial would have

been any opposition between the slogans of the liberation of the thirteen colonies and the United States of America!

Whatever the transitional forms of organisation, the realisation of the socialist United States of Europe implies the freedom of each nation which enters the federation. But the only real guarantee of its freedom is the right to say yes or no. Any "guarantee" of free cultural development, etc., is an illusion if the nation does not have the right to withdraw from the union. After the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, we do not wish to march to socialism by violence, but by patiently convincing the peoples of the superiority of centralisation. Just as, in the agrarian problem, we are not partisans of "forced collectivisation," but we want to demonstrate to the peasant, by his own experience, the advantages of large collective enterprise over small property, so in the national question we are against any "forced unification" and the only real, not fictitious, guarantee is the right of secession.

Where is the assurance that the historical evolution will lead to complete unification? Not in violence, but in the development of the productive forces. Why was the rising bourgeoisie able to dissolve the feudal provinces in the unity of the great modern nations? Because its rise corresponded to a prodigious increase of the productive forces. Why cannot Hitler, who does not spare violence, unify the European "provinces"? Because he represents the decline of capitalism.

A socialist federation, European or world-wide, by no means excludes, but implies the right of each nationality to determine its own destiny. However, we are still far from the socialist federation. Today's reality is the general oppression of the peoples of Europe by German imperialism. If under socialism it would be theoretically false to counterpose national freedom to the principle of federation, how absurd, pedantic and empty is such opposition in face of the present condition of Europe!

(In the next issue a second article will examine the question of our relations with the various underground groups, the nature of the war in Serbia, the slogan of a Constituent Assembly, and the problems of terrorism and sabotage.)

Our Attitude to Conscription

By LEON TROTSKY

QUESTION 1: What should be the role of a draftable revolutionist in the United States now?

- (a) Should he try to avoid the draft?
- (b) To what extent should the party try to conserve its cadres?
- (c) Should the party concentrate most of its strength in the military or industrial sections of the country?
- (d) What are the alternative roles of a woman revolutionist in this war?

TROTSKY: If he is draftable, then let him be drafted. I don't think he should try to avoid the draft—he must go with his generation and participate in its life. Should the party try to conserve its cadres by saving them from the army? This means conserving them in a very bad sense. When the best part of the population is mobilized, then our cadres must be among them.

Should the party concentrate most of its strength in the military or industrial organisations? This depends upon the size of the militarisation and mobilisation. If the greater part of the population is militarised then the greater part of our party would also be in the army.

About the women—inasmuch as the women will replace men in many branches of industry and social work, our comrades will also play the role of their generation.

We should understand that the life of this society, politics, everything, will be based upon war, therefore the revolutionary programme must also be based on war. We cannot oppose the fact of the war with wishful thinking; with pious pacifism. We must place ourselves upon the arena created by this society. The arena is terrible—it is war—but inasmuch as we are weak and incapable of taking the fate of society into our hands; inasmuch as the ruling class is strong enough to impose upon us this war, we are obliged to accept this basis for our activity.

"PROGRAMME FOR PEACE" IS NOT SERIOUS

I read a short report of a discussion that Shachtman had with a professor in Michigan, and Shachtman formulated this idea: "Let us have a programme for peace, not war; for the masses, not for murder," etc. What does this mean? If we do not have peace, we cannot have a programme for peace. If we have war, we must have a programme for war, and the bourgeoisie cannot help but organise the war. Neither Roosevelt nor Willkie are free to decide; they must prepare the war, and when they have prepared it they will conduct it. They will say they cannot do otherwise, because of the danger from Hitler, etc., of the danger from Japan, etc. There is only one way of avoiding the war—that is the overthrow of this society. However, as we are too weak for this task, the war is inevitable. The question then, for us, is not the same as in the bourgeois salon—"let us write an article on peace, etc.", which is suitable for publications like "The Nation". Our people must consider it seriously; we must say: the war is inevitable, so let us have an organised workers' programme for the war. The draft of the youth is a part of the war and becomes part of our programme.

It is questionable whether the United States will send an expeditionary force at this time. I have the impression that they are not disposed to send an army to Europe or anywhere else for a couple of years, because you cannot create such an army over-night in a country where you do not have a military tradition, as, for instance, in Germany, where for centuries they have had a tradition of Prussian militarism.

Now the capitalists wish to create this tremendous army of millions, to create officers, to create a new military spirit, and they have begun with full success to change the public opinion of the nation toward militarism. At the time that Roosevelt made his campaign speech, there was an outburst of public opinion for isolationism, but now all this sentiment belongs to the past—to the childhood of the nation—in spite of the fact that it took place only a few months ago.

Now the national feeling is for a tremendous army, navy and air force. This is the psychological atmosphere for the creation of a military machine, and you will see it become stronger and stronger every day and every week. You will have military schools, etc., and a Prussianisation of the United States will take place. The sons of the bourgeois families will become imbued with Prussian feelings and ideas, and their parents will be proud that their sons look like Prussian lieutenants. To some extent this will be also true of the workers.

SEPARATING THE WORKERS FROM THE BOSSES

That is why we must try to separate the workers from the others by a programme of education, of workers' schools, of workers' officers, devoted to the welfare of the worker army, etc. We cannot escape from the militarisation but inside the machine we can observe the class line. The American workers do not want to be conquered by Hitler, and to those who say "Let us have a peace programme", the worker will reply, "But Hitler does not want a peace programme." Therefore we say: We will defend the United States with a workers' army, with workers' officers, with a workers' government, etc. If we are not pacifists, who wait for a better future, and if we are active revolutionists, our job is to penetrate into the whole military machine. Of course, out of this army, tomorrow they might select a corps to send to be annihilated, but war is a risky business and we cannot invent any medicine against these risks.

Of course the party can make certain exceptions of those men who are necessary for a certain job, but this concerns only individual exceptions, and here we are discussing the rule. Furthermore, our comrades should be the best soldiers and the best officers and at the same time the best class militants. They should provoke in the workers a mistrust of the old tradition, the military plans of the bourgeois class and officers, and should insist upon the necessity of educating workers' officers, who will be absolutely loyal to the proletariat. In this epoch every great question, national or international, will be resolved with arms—not by peaceful means. It doesn't depend upon my will or your will, but is caused by the contradictions of the society which has put this problem before us, and from which we cannot escape. That is why it is the duty of every worker and revolutionist to learn how to manipulate arms skilfully.

About the losses in the trade unions, if we have a large mobilisation, then the unions will immediately lose the best elements and only the older people will remain. These people are not as likely to be persistent. On the other hand, the younger generations for the first time in history will feel themselves armed—by the State itself! It is absolutely correct that in the first period we will have an explosion of chauvinistic patriotism, and that we will be isolated even more than now; and that this period of activity will inevitably be limited by repressions, but we must adapt ourselves to the situation. That is why it would be doubly stupid to present a purely abstract pacifist position today; the feeling the masses have is that it is necessary to defend themselves. We must say: "Roosevelt (or Willkie) says it is necessary to defend the country; good! only it must be our country, not that of the 60 families and their Wall Street. The army must be under our own command; we must have our own officers, who will be loyal to us." In this way we can find an approach to the masses that will not push them away from us; and thus to prepare for the second step—a more revolutionary one.

PROFOUND IMPORTANCE OF FRENCH EVENTS

We must use the example of France to the very end. We must say, "I warn you, workers, that they (the bourgeoisie) will betray you! Look at Pétain, who is a friend of Hitler. Shall we have the same thing happen in this country. We must create our own machine, under workers' control." We must be careful not to identify ourselves with the chauvinists, nor with the confused sentiments of self-preservation, but we must understand their feelings and adapt ourselves to these feelings critically, and prepare the masses for a better understanding of the situation, otherwise we will remain a sect, of which the pacifist variety is the most miserable.

We must also say that the war has a tendency toward totalitarian dictatorship. War develops a centralisation, and during war the bourgeois class cannot allow the workers any new concessions. The trade unions will therefore become a kind of Red Cross for the workers, a sort of philanthropic institution. The bosses themselves will be under control by the State, everything will be sacrificed to the army, and the trade union influence will become zero. And we must say of this now: "If you don't place yourselves on a workers' military basis, with workers' schools, workers' officers, etc., you will be doomed." And this, in its own way, will preserve the trade unions themselves.

Even if the United States sends armies abroad, to Europe or Asia, and the mortality rate will be expectedly high, we cannot make exceptions for our comrades, because on the other hand we cannot foresee the tempo of revolutionary development in Europe or Asia, and perhaps the

American army will enter such a country during a revolutionary beginning. In that case even two or three of our men can play a tremendous role during such a period. They might try to use this American army against such a revolution, and in that case even one courageous man can turn the regiment into another direction. This cannot be foreseen—there are too many unknowns; but that is why we say we must all go with our class.

WE CANNOT STAND ASIDE FROM OUR CLASS!

I do not believe that a revolutionary can remain aside for the first critical period—say, a year or so—and then come with his stick and hat and say, "Now, comrades, we will begin the revolution!" Excuse me for making a caricature of this. But if he is in the army and tells the others about the dangers in the bourgeois institutions and advises them to create a workers' programme for war, in

spite of all the chauvinistic attacks upon him, and even if they turn him away, they will later say, "Remember, he told us so." And then he becomes an authority. This is repeated in every war, and not only in wars but in strikes and trade union movements. All they have to remember is: "This man warned us and we rejected him." Then he becomes their leader, a hero.

If the leaders seek only to preserve themselves, that is what they become; preserves—dried preserves. If they enter the movement, they give the impulse to five, ten, twenty others. It is more important to multiply our cadres than to preserve them, and they can be multiplied by the hundreds. Our cadres need education and experience in mass movements, and how can they get this outside the life of the masses? No, it is not possible to jump out of your epoch. Moreover, we would have to make arrangements with the General Staff, and I am sure they would not agree with the idea of escape!

Read

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